



SUBTERRANEA BRITANNICA

SECRETARY'S NEWSLETTER 6
(March 1991)

Editor: Malcolm Tadd, 65 Trindles Road, South Nutfield, Redhill, Surrey.
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New Members

Welcome to,

David Ferris	Kensington and San Francisco		
Terry Moore	Hertfordshire	Frank Crosby	Cambridge
Philip Burton	Berkshire	James Murphy	Brea, California
Robert Clark	Stirlingshire	David Bloomfield	Surrey
June Gibson	London	Michael Crumpton	Worcestershire
Helen Hocking	London	Raymond Demand	London
Tom Evans	Sussex	Joan Jackson	Shropshire
Andrew Thompson	London	Matthew Clark	Surrey
Mary Ann Maye	Hertfordshire	Jill Richardson	Cambridge
J.M.Harte	Surrey	John Bowers	Lancashire
Pat Briggs	Hertfordshire	Richard Hope-Hawkins	Bristol

Ice House for Sale.

Would you like to buy an ice house at Findhorn Bay in Scotland? (£6000+)
Contact the editor for further details.

Symposium On World War Two Defenses.

The Surrey Industrial History Group will be hosting this symposium at Surrey University, Guildford on November 2nd 1991. Cost £6.00 + lunch. For details write to Gordon Knowles, SIHG, 7, Squirrels Green, Great Bookham, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT23 3LE. 0372 458396

Autumn Day Conference

This will be, as usual, held at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge on Saturday 26th October 1991. Suggestions or volunteers for speakers are very welcome.

Major Archaeological Discovery in Leicestershire

Extraction at a British Coal opencast site, "The Lounge", near Ashby has unearthed ancient mine shafts.

The Nottingham University Tree Ring Dating Laboratory, date oak pit props in the shaft at 1450-1463. Although the Romans were possibly mining for coal in the region, it is widely believed that the arrival of German miners in the 16th century revolutionised techniques. This period coincided with the oldest text book on mining, written by the German, George Agricola, in 1556. Since the method of mining in the shafts conforms to Agricola's description, it is possible, that the Germans did not teach the English how to mine in the 16th century, as has always been assumed, but that Agricola was describing established English mining methods.

It is an interesting coincidence that as the discoveries were being made, the last colliery in the region, Bagworth, was being closed.

This information comes from, Leicestershire Mercury, February 22 1991. Mentioned are Fred Hartley of the Leicestershire Museum Service and Stuart Warburton of the yet-to-be-opened Snibston Museum of Science and Industry in Coalville.

Thanks to Muriel Shaw for the cutting and it is said that a more informative article has appeared in The Daily Telegraph.

Caversham Chalk Caverns

There are chalk caverns 17m below the streets of Caversham, near Reading, which have been lined with a 49mm thick coating of shotcrete while Wimpey Geotech assesses the stability of these ancient mineworkings on behalf of Reading Borough Council.

Shotcrete is a steel fibre reinforced sprayed concrete, which will penetrate into open tension cracks and prevent further surface spalling.

In addition future instability will be indicated if the concrete cracks.

Unfortunately one part of the system was so unstable that it had to be isolated with a grout bag dam and the space filled with 220t of grout.

Information from New Civil Engineer 24th Jan. 1991
Thanks to Margaret Dobson

A Paris Exhibition

"Les dessous de la ville" - Paris Souterranean" (at the Pavillion de l'Arsenal, 21 boulevard Morland until March 31) was a fine exhibition revealing all aspects of underground Paris from the mushroom beds and quarries to the vast network of utility services.

The upper floor demonstrated the various types of subterranean activities and, with the aid of infra-red activated headsets and video material, one could simulate driving a train, listen to the traffic controllers' comments, inspect the sewers and watch extracts from the films, The Third Man and Subway.

There is a regular display of current building projects in Paris on the ground floor of this pavilion which is always worth a visit).

Information from Building Design, March 1, 1991. Thanks to Paul Sowan

White Elephants in Belgium

Although Britain is far from immune from creating useless engineering structures and buildings (I can of four or five near our home without counting vacant new office blocks), it does not seem to have captured the public imagination as it has done in Belgium. Nor, if a recent article

(reference unknown) in The Daily Telegraph, is to be believed does the scale in Britain match that of Belgium.

The Telegraph refers to a Belgium bestseller, Guide to Useless Public Works - 350 pages! Amongst the long list of structures is included, sealed up metro stations, an underground car park accessible only through a manhole and water tunnels which provide water to no-one. The Telegraph also refers to a mania for motorist's tunnels under Brussels.

Thanks to Mike Griffiths

How Many Tunnels ARE There Under the Thames?
The London Water Ring-Main Adds to the Number.

An item in Newsletter 11 (1987) listed known tunnels under the Thames, within the Greater London area.

The list included 16 tunnels through which the public are currently able to travel, 3 through which this was once possible, and 11 service tunnels for cables, water, etc... a known total of 30.

That the number, even then, was being added to was known as noted in Newsletter 9 (1986), where brief details were given of the projected London water ring-main.

An up-to-date account of the ring-main was published in Tunnels and Tunnelling 22(4), pp. 48-50 (1990), where we learn that the tunnel is driven as far as possible, in the London Clay, but dips into the problematical Woolwich and Reading Beds in places. It is at least twice the length of the projected Channel Tunnel, and runs at a minimum depth below surface of 30 metres. There are about 16 surge shafts, and at least two further under-Thames crossings.

Paul W. Sowan

Have You Seen This Picture Before?

Robert Hunt's British Mining (1884), almost exclusively devoted to metalliferous mining apart from several pages on plumabago, is well supplied with engravings to indicate mining equipment, methods etc.

In pages 602-603 we find a detailed description of overhand stoping, and his fig. 164 on the latter page purports to illustrate the text. This figure seemed familiar, although I had never before February 1991 looked through Hunt's volume. The illustration is in fact nothing whatever to do with metalliferous mining! It was first published in 1844 to illustrate the technique used to excavate the two major tunnels (Bletchingley, Surrey; and Saltwood, Kent) on the South-Eastern Railway's original main line to Dover. The source is Frederick Walter Simm's Practical Tunnelling, in which (in this first of the four editions issued) great detail is given for the excavation of the two tunnels. Several other illustrations used by Hunt have been taken from this same work - e.g. Hunt's fig. 155 (p.581) shewing men excavating in a well-timbered gallery is in fact from Simms (p. 68) and shews the driving of the first heading at invert level to link all the

working shafts on the railway tunnel, and to effect the complete drainage of the works. Hunt's fig. 158 (p.591) does indeed shew a horse-whim, albeit a south-eastern railway contractors' model as first published by Simms (fig.1 on p.77!) And the end and side views of an 'ore waggon'(Hunt's fig.160 p.598) are from Simms also (p.76) Hunt's use of Simms' tunnelling technique illustration is not the only case of misappropriation of that particular figure. Only a few years ago it was republished in a railway history book, where it was described as showing work in progress on the Great Western Railway's Box tunnel, on the Bristol main line at Wiltshire. I suspect it will be found posing in other guises in a number of other volumes, too!

Paul W. Sowen 1991

Subterranean Structures at Ingleborough Hall

I recently visited Ingleborough Hall in North Yorkshire (SD 747 693) to look at the ice-house. This had various interesting features including the remains of a door and two metal pins in the wall near the ice well which may have supported a pulley for lowering ice. A pulley at Wall Hall, in Hertfordshire, is illustrated in Beamon and Roaf's "Ice Houses of Britain" on page 126 but they are rare in ice-houses in Northern England.

However, a more unusual underground feature at the Hall is a passageway leading from the kitchen court-yard to the roadway outside the Hall grounds. This passage-way is 83 metres long 3 metres high and 4 metres wide with a cobbled floor and barrel-vaulted stone roof. The walls are rendered in places and marked to give the appearance of stone blocks. It seems that the function of the passage-way was to allow servants to leave the Hall without being visible to the occupants.

Although the icehouse and the passageway are in private grounds and may only be visited with permission, the three metre wide arched exit from the passageway (now blocked) can be seen at the side of a public road, Thwaites Lane, opposite the village church. Thwaites Lane itself goes under the Hall grounds through two tunnels each of more than 30 metres long.

Sallie Bassham 27.2.91

An Enigmatic Underground Structure Between Cowgate Cemetery and the Drop Redoubt at Dover.

In favourable light and visibility, the observant visitor to Dover Castle may, on studying the slopes below the nearest parts of the Western Heights fortifications, notice an isolated tall slender structure amongst bushes and trees on the grassy slope.

Closer inspection of this structure, which appears to be a chimney has been made considerably easier by the work of the "White Cliffs Countryside Project" which has cleared scrub and established footpaths. One such path leads from the Military Road, along the foot of the grassy slope, to the public paths and steps by the allotments above Adrian Street.

The chimney, or possibly ventilation shaft, is brick-built and stands about 60 courses (4.5 metres) high. The design is quite elaborate. There is a base about 0.95 metres square, surmounted by two courses of plinth bricks, then the main shaft (with a recessed panel in each face) constituting the main height of the structure. An ornate polychrome corbelled structure adorns the top. There is nothing in the immediately surrounding grassland to offer any clues what might lie below.

Examination of the next plot of land below the open space, the heavily overgrown Cowgate Cemetery, proved more fruitful. Almost immediately below the chimney the back or retaining wall abuts against the slope leading up to the Drop Redoubt. And in this there is seen what appears to be a tripartite tunnel entrance which, when noted a year or two ago, seemed to have been repaired with new brickwork in the recent past. Whatever void the chimney ventilated appears to have had its entrance here.

I understand that the Dover Museums have considered the structure, but are currently unable to suggest its date or purpose. The majority of the dates in the cemetery appear to be 19th C, and few, if any, more recent than the 1850s were noted in a cursory inspection.

Paul Sowan 30.12.1990

Underground Features at Camden Goods Yard as on 28th July 1990

The trip was made by Barbara and Malcolm Tadd and Roger Morgan and a GLIAS newsletter; No.129, August 1990, set the scene.

The newsletter referred to a letter, sent to Camden Council, urging it to respect the site's historic layout in future developments.

Camden was the first trunk goods station in London at the terminus of Robert Stephenson's London and Birmingham Railway opened in 1837-8 (?). It was the first freight terminus for London's trade with the Midlands and north of England. It was also the largest and most important of such stations until the opening of King's Cross in 1850. The present basement marked the site of the main goods shed.

The letter also described how the layout of the eastern corner of the site was altered for the construction of the North London Railway in 1848-50 but had survived below ground in the vaulted cellars of the former workshop for waggon construction and repair. Also surviving underground was the winding engine house of the Euston incline.

We thought we would try to find someone at the Camden site to show us round and took ourselves to the end of Princes road where it intersects with Gloucester Avenue. We turned right at the 'Engineer' and crossed the road into a derelict looking premises which form part of the Camden Goods Yard. We descended shallow steps which formerly allowed horses to ascend and descend. At the foot of the stairs there was a short bricked-up passage to the right. (Later investigation determined that the other side of the brick wall constituted a garden feature in the recent housing development, 'Riverside Walk'. This is in Princess Walk behind the 'Engineer'). The

passage to the left led to a broken down brick wall but before it was reached a cross passage was encountered. The right arm of the cross passage was bricked-up but the left arm led to a deep unguarded pit with water at the bottom. There were signs that some sort of work was in progress but we concluded that the appearance of the site was consistent with it being the site of the former cable winding engine (mentioned in the GLIAS newsletter) for hauling trains up Camden Bank. (See for example, London's Termini, Alan Jackson, David and Charles, London, 1969. pp 19-20.)

Continuing along the original passage, we reached the broken down wall. Walking was obstructed by numerous old and new electric cables. This passage, like all other constructions on the site, was of brick. Egress across the broken down wall led to a large flat and empty demolition site. Until a few weeks of this trip these were vaults to a building. (The Waggon Workshops?) The site lay on a NE-SW axis and with its surrounding walls it gave the appearance of a shallow pit approximately 15 feet deep. There were breaks in the walls, such as the one we had just come through, but only one other led to further passages. This was a door at the eastern corner of the site which revealed a tunnel with blocked passages on the left and on the right. The one on the left had recently led to the "catacombs" (?) next to the Saturday Market in Chalk Farm Road. The market site itself is a demolition site opposite Hartland road. The passage straight on had, until recently, exited into the Market itself. (The right hand passage was also blocked.) Before the straight-on passage terminated, brand new brickwork, doors and electric pumps were encountered. It was very clear that extensive new developments were afoot. Near this area the underground canal revealed itself - complete with barge. This canal branches off the Regents Canal and we surmised that it was removing rubbish from the site. On our side of the canal an open steel door led to the vaults of a derelict bonded warehouse. An intricate series which was too extensive to explore. We returned the way we came - the only way.

Above ground we explored Camden Market. Adjacent to this we ascended a ramp to the top level of the former, very large, stable block. The was recognisable by stable doors and horse troughs. On the other side of the market was an extensive series of brick arches, open to all at ground level, the "Catacombs" (?)

A curious feature of the day was that, not too far from the canal site underground, the brick was fake. A small recess had been disguised with a type of wall board painted and embossed to look exactly like brickwork!

Malcolm Tadd

BOOK REVIEWS

Alabaster. John Young, 1990, Derbyshire Museum Service, County Education Department, John Turner House, The Parkway, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2FW

There are widely scattered occurrences of anhydrite and gypsum throughout England. In a few of these, a rare form of the latter mineral, alabaster, of sufficient quality for ornamental carving has been worked opencast / or by underground mining. It is still mined at Fauld (Staffordshire) today.

John Young's splendidly produced book (A4 size, decently printed with appropriate maps and a well chosen selection of photographs some in colour) sets the general scene, but concentrates more particularly on the opencasting and mining of alabaster in Chellaston and adjoining parishes a few kilometres SE of Derby. Appropriately, as with building-stone quarrying, the opportunity presented by a product sufficiently distinctive or sufficiently valuable to be documented for establishing provenance links and distribution maps has not been neglected. The earliest established occurrence of sculpture in Chellaston Alabaster is presented as the tomb of Ralph Green (he died in 1414) and his wife Katherine in Lowick church, Northamptonshire. There is a survey of Medieval carving in alabaster, with coloured illustrations of examples. And the extensive 19th century openworking and mining is described and illustrated. It is suggested that most or all of the Medieval working was shallow and opencast, with mining becoming important last century.

Alongside the extraction of sculpture-quality alabaster, very much larger quantities of inferior gypsum were also worked for plaster manufacture. This, too, is dealt with, as are relevant local canal and railway developments.

The page and a half of "references and acknowledgements" indicates a wide range of primary sources has been consulted, and there is a three page index. Both in the quality of the research work, and of presentation, this little study sets a high standard seldom reached by locally based mining or quarrying historians. It should be widely distributed and read for these reasons, as much for the inherent interest of the subject matter.

Paul Sowan

Book Review in Descent 98, p.19 (1991)

The Hidden Side of Swaledale. John Hardy. Frank Peters. Kendal. 1989. 85pp, numerous illustrations. Hardback. 250mm times 400mm. £9.95 ISBN 0 948511 40 0

Chris Jones, the reviewer is highly enthusiastic about the presentation of the book which is by a local methodist minister who is not well known, it is claimed, to the local mining history community.

However Chris Jones complains about author's attitude to safety.

Paul Sowan has a private copy of the book.

Eric Tonks, The Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands. History, Operation and Railways. Part VIII. South Lincolnshire. Cheltenham: Runpast Publishing, 1991. 256pp. ISBN 1 870754 09 3. £18.95

The latest published part of Tonks' comprehensive survey is produced to the same high standard as that of the five previously issued volumes.

In this South Lincolnshire volume there is much information recorded concerning ironstone mines at:

Thistleton mines	SK 920191, SK 915192
Easton mines	SK 940267
Coleby mine	SK 977661
Monks Abbey mine	SK 990716
Greetwell mines	SK 998724, TF 001717, TF 002719, TF 004723, TF 003724, SK 998724, TF 003716, SK 994729,
Acre House mines	TF 113963, TF 115964
Nettleton mines	TF 111981, TF 112987, TF 115971, TF 124982, TF 115982,

As usual, there is an excellent selection of photographs, including some underground views, and carefully drawn maps. Historical evidence for the commencement and cessation of working of the various mines and opencast pits is reviewed, and there are details not only of railway rolling stock and trackways, but also of heavy quarrying machinery employed.

Paul W. Sowan 1991

Adrian Pearce (1990) Database of Underground Sites in South East England. Records Chelsea Speleological Society 18: 137pp. £5.00 from Harry Pearman, 58 Prospect Place, Wapping Wall, London E1 9TJ

Adrian Pearce, a former secretary to the Peak District Mines Historical Society Ltd., and to the National Association of Mining History Organisations, moved from Derby to Chatham a few years ago. He lost no time in taking up active field and archival research into the limestone mines of the Brightling area in Sussex. We have too few such activists!

In addition to swelling the publications of Kent Underground Research Group (KURG) beyond recognition, he systematically recorded as many of the known underground sites in a loosely-defined South East area (extending from Wiltshire through Gloucestershire to Norfolk!) - drawing primarily on the publications of the Chelsea Speleological Society, KURG, Sub. Brit. Unit Two CRE, and other sources including individual persons known to have amassed data.

The database, as printed, thus forms a useful first checklist for the presence or absence of underground sites in some 17 counties, and is evidently a spin-off from NAMHO member groups' work with the Department of the Environment-sponsored Ove Arup study of the presence or absence of underground mining throughout the country. It extends (to 2,063 entries) the CSS Gazetteer published in 1983.

The sites are listed in three ways, so can be sought for by location ("Where the position of the feature is known to within a square kilometre Ordnance Survey grid square")- the sites are listed in NGR number from SP 0512 (Chedworth, Hants) to TV 5897 (Beachy Head, Sussex) in pages 8-49; by subject (using a modified form of Harry Pearman's site type codes) - in

pages 50-94; or by place - ("This method can be used if the nearest place name or geographical feature is known.") - sites are so listed, from Abbey Wood, Kent, to Yewhedges, Kent, in pages 95-135.

All classes of underground sites are included, including mines, domestic storage, tunnels, military, garden features, services, miscellaneous subsidences of unknown classification, and natural cavities.

Whilst undoubtedly a useful publication, the limitations of the Database should be appreciated. The presence or absence of particular features can be established, although one hopes all the 2,063 four-figure grid references have been carefully double-checked! But published references have by and large been taken from only a limited range of specialised publications, principally those of CSS, KURG, Sub. Brit. Unit Two etc. Material published by Croydon Caving Club seems not to have been noticed. Nor have substantial articles in established national or local journals which would often yield very much more reliable information than a brief interim paragraph in a caving club publication. In a number of cases, the enquirer is referred to one of a number of private individuals for further details. Your reviewer notes that he is credited with further information on eight or so chalk mines or chalkwells, and a healthy sprinkling of sites in the 'fringe' counties such as Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Wiltshire ... but very few in Surrey or Kent where he has been most active, and none at all for the east Kent Upper Greensand mines for which he surely holds more data than anybody! And few or none for his other particular specialisations, namely transport tunnels in general, and the Folkestone / Dover area in particular!

Paul Sowan 1991

Editor's Note. A loan copy of the said Database is available. Apply Barbara Tadd.

Sylvia P. Beamon and Susan Roaf. The Ice-houses of Britain. Routledge. London 1990. 553pp. 246 by 189. 66 black and white photographs and line drawings. ISBN 0-415-03301-2 £100

This is an excellent work; the only defect being the high price.

It is in two parts which are reasonably independent of each other and could be published separately. Part I (180 pages) is by Susan Roaf and belies the title by being an outline of mankind's historic quest to provide himself with cool food and drink in the summer. 4000 years ago ice and snow was brought down from the mountains of Mesopotamia for this purpose. From this point in time the author traces the trading and usage of ice and snow throughout the various periods in history to the present time. References are made to the Middle East in the earliest times and Spain France and Italy in the middle ages.

We are surprised to learn such facts that, in the middle ages, boat loads of snow were arriving at Istanbul or that there were huge snow repositories built under Madrid. We are less surprised to learn that it was mainly the rich that had the usage of the snow and ice in the summer and that, for

example Louis IV's palace of Versailles was thus provided. One can however marvel at Anne of Russia's fabulous ice palace of 1737.

Ice storage seems to have started in Britain in 1619 when James I constructed a snow well at Greenwich. But it wasn't until the prosperity and stability of the 18th century resulted in numerous country estates being established and the economics of estate management was studied that ice-houses became fashionable. It was realised that ice constituted a winter crop that could be used or sold in the summer. Parallel with this ice houses were constructed in towns and cities mainly to serve ice-cream manufacturers and the fish trade.

By the 1880s the availability of ice-storage facilities had percolated down the social scale and ice storage sheds were installed in suburban gardens.

On her journey from the middle ages to Victorian times, Susan Roaf brings us familiar names from history; John Evelyn, Robert Boyle, William Cobbett.

In 1806 Britain began to import ice from the USA, (Wenham Lake ice) and later Norway became a major source.

The various types of ice-houses are discussed in detail, using the classification of A. Niver Robertson, as are the conditions to be satisfied in the construction of a successful ice-house. Drainage was the most important factor since wet ice thaws faster than dry ice. The practice of using dry straw as an insulating material meant that the decomposing straw could deplete the oxygen in the ice-house and without adequate ventilation there was the possibility of suffocating on entering an ice-house. Another curious fact was that the final stages of filling an ice-house constituted very hot work and was accomplished stripped to the waist. The freezing mass lost heat which rose as warm air. The scientific bases behind these phenomena are discussed.

Among the factors which caused the demise of the British Ice-house Susan Roaf believes that the winters got warmer and the ice scarcer. She identifies a "little ice-age" during 1430-1850.

Part I ends with appendices, chapter notes and an interesting bibliography.

I commend the work to anyone who wants a fascinating read and also appreciates scholarship.

Sylvia Beamon's Part II, which is a gazetteer constitutes the greater part of the book and one can only marvel at the persistent single minded effort and dedication which must have been needed to see it to publication.

An important point is that the book is well presented and that the gazetteer is easy on the eye. This makes browsing a pleasure. Sites are listed mainly by county but there are separate sections for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire. Whenever possible references are given for each site and the source of information always given. There are no drawings (it would bring the volume to an impossible size) but there are numerous references to drawings. Sometimes there are reviews at the beginning of each county section and there are longer reviews for Scotland and Wales.

As Sylvia Beamon says, the gazeteer is unlikely to be complete since some counties may lack ice-house devotees. However it must be said there is an impression of completeness about the work.

Analysis of the information sources show them to be relatively few in number. County Museum Services are in evidence but there are apparently some very prolific individual ice-house researchers. G.C. Lock appears for numerous sites and other names are principally connected with specific regions. Most have publications to their names. To list them; R.David (Cumbria and Lancashire), R. Perkins (Derbyshire). A. Penny (Dorset), M. Ellis (Hampshire). Edwin Rose (Norfolk), G.H. Powell (Isle of Wight), J.W. Bainbridge (Northumberland) and A. Wharton (Shropshire). Ron Martin has almost single handed produced the 90-100 references on Sussex and that includes surveying and drawing many of them. In Scotland we are indebted to Tim Buxbaum and in Wales to Eurwyn Wiliam.

If ice-houses are your interest you will have to buy this book but you will not regret it since readable reference books are not too common.

Malcolm Tadd

Ian Tyler. Force Crag. The History of a Lakeland Mine. Red Earth Publications, 7 Silver Street, Marton, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0NQ, 1990 120pp, 44 plates, sketches and memorabilia. Price to Sub. Brit. members £6.29 plus £1 P and P. Non-members £6.99 plus £1.

Force Crag Mine is near Keswick and was opened in the 1830s for lead ore but since then has been worked for zinc ore and barytes.

I don't know where the author procured most of his information but I found the book made compulsive and entertaining reading. Like many good stories it is both sad and inspiring.

Company after company worked this mine and company after company failed. Reasons for failure were, failure to locate the barytes lode, falling prices, loss of government subsidies, natural calamities and loss of confidence. One company would fail and a year or two later another would arrive with fresh ideas and more up-to-date equipment. The latest company started in 1984 after the previous had given up in 1982.

The author proclaims that it is his ambition to survey, photograph and publish individual histories of all the mines in the Lake District. For this mine he has certainly performed and presented fine detailed research and told a good story.

Malcolm Tadd

Letter to the editor.

Dear Mr. Tadd

I am sorry that it has taken so long for me to respond to the treasurers note in the October newsletter (5), but it did not contain a single address!

I am appalled to see that you are dropping your corporate subscription to that of your standard rate. For the following reasons: (i) geotechnical companies charge hourly rates of at least £20 if not £30-50 an hour for site visits / laboratory work; I know this from a summer job I had nearly three years ago; the £12 subscription can be earned in little over half an hour (ii) corporations can claim the subscription as a legitimate tax expense (iii) other organisations I belong to, such as the Geological Society and the Geologist Association, charge far more than 200 per cent for a corporate / institutional subscription (iv) the Geological Society go further and charge for their facilities and encourage donations (v). I am sure that Subterranea Britannica could earn consultancy fees from its collective knowledge and information held on file, and encourage corporate donations.

Yours etc. David A.G. Nowell
Milton Keynes

Editor's comment.

David makes good points. The absence of at least the editor's address on the newsletter is unacceptable and annoying. It shouldn't happen again! It arises from over doing an effort to keep the cost of the newsletter down by cutting out redundant information!

With regards to corporate subscriptions the committee had in mind librarians, who almost universally, are having adverse pressures put on their budgets. The committee agree that the commercial organisations David has in mind are in business to make as much money as possible and can well afford £12. We are consequently reconsidering the position.

With regard to the third point - consultancy fees, Sub. Brit. is not a business and I for one would not like it to become one. Sub. Brit. does, on the other hand, need money. With more money we could have better newsletters and bulletins. Also we could arrange trips. Suppose, however, member X was to perform a 4 hour search through the archives on behalf of a District Council. (This can happen.) Even if X was to charge the Council (thereby possibly entangling himself in legal liabilities) it is his money not Sub. Brits.

Another important consideration is that I am not sure if Sub. Brit. has archives as such. It is true that some of us have document collections and, principally Paul Sowan, is happy to open up his extensive archives to our members. I think however they would be described as his own personal archives. We (the Tadds) on the other hand have a collection of exchange journals which we are very insistant are for the use of every member..

Please will members forward their views on all these points. The society needs to have a constructive debate and develop a policy on archiving and fund raising.